MY HEART SINGS

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1955

POEMS *By Robert J. Smithdas*

15 WEST 16th STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y., 10011

c.2

MY HEART SINGS

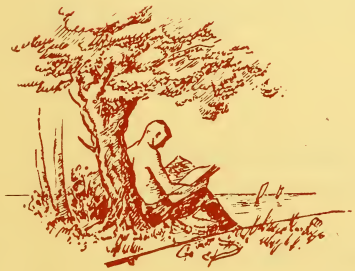
Selected Poems from the Series

"There Is A Silver Lining"

BY ROBERT J. SMITHDAS

Dedicated to

IHB LEAGUE MEMBERS



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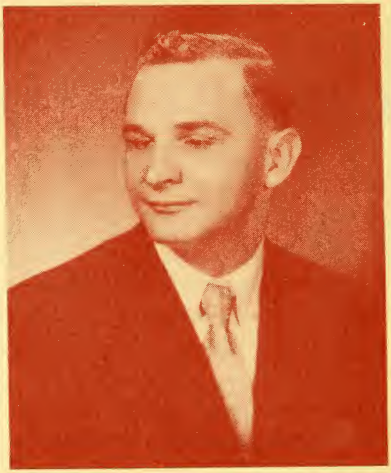
MY HEART SINGS

By Robert J. Smithdas

Robert J. Smithdas, valued staff member of The Industrial Home for the Blind Community Relations Department, and Permanent Secretary of the IHB League, though a young man, has already achieved considerable success. He is the first deaf-blind person to earn a Master's degree, and has become well known and sought after as a speaker. He is interesting, provocative and gently humorous. He is devoting his life to helping attain a better understanding for the blind and the deaf-blind.

Mr. Smithdas' poems reflect his zest for life and his sensitive idealism and cheerfulness.

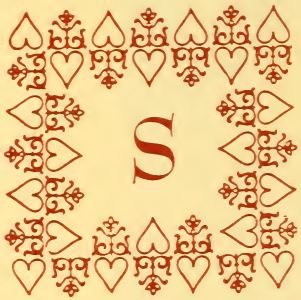


Robert J. Smithdas

A PRAYER

Lord, give me courage and the grace to bear
Life's tribulations with humility,
That I may learn, through triumph and despair,
What happiness these simple things can be:

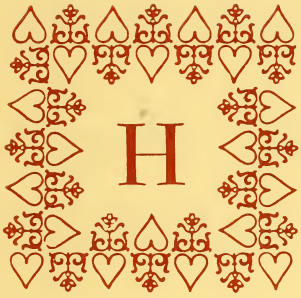
To give without desiring to receive;
To love without requiring to be loved;
To revive faith in those who doubt or grieve;
To move the heart that never has been moved.



SONG OF THE MORNING

Breathe on me, day,
Scatter the clinging shadows from my soul:
Drive them away
Like clouds from this green earth that thirsts for sun.
When they are gone
Bring all that's true and good and beautiful.

Breathe on me, day:
Pierce through the broken windows of my soul
With such a ray
Of happiness that I will never know
How sorrows grow,
But will find joy although my world is small.



HYMN OF PRAISE

I praise my God, for He has guided me
Through darkness too intense to find the day;
I praise my God, for He provided me
With music when all sound had died away.

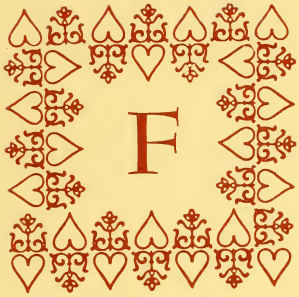
Out of the depths of silence too profound,
Out of the depths of darkness and despair,
My soul has risen through the world and found
A thousand blessings in His loving care.

Into the songless darkness of my days
The light of hope and song of love have crept,
Until my spirit sings this hymn of praise
To Him who woke me when my whole life slept.

SPRING ADVENT

Under my hand I feel the young grass growing,
So soft and smooth — almost like velveteen;
Here on my cheek an April breeze is blowing
Cool scents of lilac and a world grown green.
And somewhere in those apple trees, unseen,
Songbirds are building nests while gaily sowing
The winds with seeds of music that they glean
From southlands where the sun is always glowing.

My eyes are closed; yet somehow, without knowing,
My senses guess what beauty lies between
This sunlit nook and those far blue hills throwing
Bright spears of color where blank snows have been.
Now suddenly the air is stirred with wonder
As Spring comes bursting in like silent thunder.



FIDELITY

Because I love you tenderly, I hide
My soul's devotion with a quiet smile,
Unwilling to let these lips of mine defile
Love's inner beauty with mere words of pride.
Yet though the gift to praise may be denied,
Remember that my silence has no guile;
For love can never truly reconcile
Weak language where strong faith has testified.

I have no skill to build you works of art;
I cannot sing immortal songs or write
Enduring verse to give you lasting fame.
I praise you from the altar of my heart,
Where tall white candles, burning day and night,
Give forth a pure and steady votive flame.

FOR MY NIECE

My darling, you are still too young to know
What makes these pretty trees and flowers grow,
Who lights the bright lamps of the stars at night,
And fills the morning skies with lakes of light.

Your dreams are full of fairies, old and wise;
They throw their shining star dust in your eyes
So that you see, in every lonely place,
The smiling of a kindly, wrinkled face.

You hear their lilting laughter in the rain,
Their dancing footsteps running through the lane,
And when the day is done, you nod and sigh,
Listening for their evening lullaby.

You see and hear these things I saw and heard
When I was young, before my senses blurred;
So when I press your tiny, dimpled hand,
It is to let you know — I understand.

PROSPECTOR

Real gold is where you find it — so they say —
And I still find it everywhere I go.
Not in the rugged folds of granite hills,
Nor in the valleys of their tumbling streams,
But in the unknown hours of each new day;
The precious gift of friendship; love's warm glow;
And all the glory of this world that fills
My heart with its imperishable dreams.

PARADOX

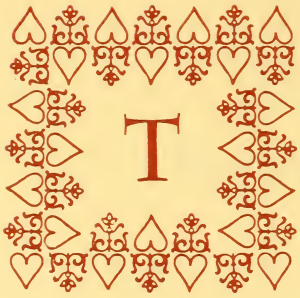
I wonder where the flowers go
When their last petals fall to earth.
Slender and brown above the snow
Their withered stalks sway to and fro,
Impatient for the spring's rebirth.

Then April, with its sparkling breath,
Redeems them from their frost-bound tomb;
How suddenly they spring from death,
And with a rainbow glory wreathe
Bare fields with resurrected bloom.

REVERIE

I've loved my life and all that life could give;
I've feared my death and prayed that I might live
One day, one hour, another fleeting year,
To love still more the things I hold so dear.

And when slow Time shall scatter, far as dust,
These frail and mortal relics, as he must,
No further boon or blessing shall I ask
But that I've lived, loved, and done my task.



THE BELLS

How solemnly, slowly,
Glad Christmas bells are singing,
Their voices sweet and lowly.
How solemnly, slowly,
Each anthem, deep and holy,
Across the world is ringing!
How solemnly, slowly,
Glad Christmas bells are singing.

TRIBUTE TO EBEN P. MORFORD

Founder of The Industrial Home for the Blind, Brooklyn, New York,

(who lost his sight when he was seventeen)

He conquered darkness with a brighter light
Than any sun or star of heaven knows;
He held the torch of faith close to his heart,
And by its flame, unwavering and pure,
Saw suddenly a vision that endured
To bear the fruits of unremitting toil.

He sought for freedom of his fellow men
Who bear the stigma of a darkened world;
And, with a true crusader's dauntless zeal,
He forged the strong convictions of his dreams
Into a lasting symbol that became
The hallmark of his courage and his faith.

Bronze scrolls and marble tablets fall to dust;
But in Time's book of immortality
His memory will linger still, because
His noble deeds are testimonials
Of selfless love for others, like himself,
Who found an idle living hard to bear.

A CHRISTMAS GREETING TO THE PRESIDENT

(Dedicated and presented to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Christmas, 1954)

Though Fate conspires to weave your destiny
Into a somber web of human cares,
You are the living emblem of our dreams
Of peace and happiness. In your strong hands,
Gentle but firm from wielding freedom's sword,
We place our hopes that future years may bring
A brighter glory to our country's pride.

Because your faith in Mankind never fails;
Because your heart believes in holy things
With much simplicity and earnestness,
We pledge our own, remembering with you
A tiny Babe in Bethlehem, who once,
Smiling in sleep, dreamed that the world might be
A kingdom blessed with universal love.

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